

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Shawna Dennett <shawna@wichitahabitat.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 12:13 PM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Cc: Kathy Lefler; Ann Patterson
Subject: ARPA Funds

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you to the members of the SPARK Council for accepting proposals and testimony from the community on the use of ARPA funds.

I am writing to request that a portion of these funds are used in the development of affordable housing to increase supply of affordable and high-quality living units across Kansas. Habitat for Humanity affiliates have been very successful in meeting this goal by serving Kansans for the past 40 years and are primed to continue doing this.

I am an eleven-year employee of Wichita Habitat for Humanity and a member of the Kansas Habitat Homes Advisory Council that works alongside approximately 17 active Habitat for Humanity affiliates that serve constituents in all areas of Kansas including rural and urban communities. The larger affiliates in Wichita, Lawrence, Topeka and Kansas City who have employees provide limited operational supports to the Habitat for Humanity affiliates who are run solely by volunteers including (but not limited to) those in McPherson County, Harvey County, Arkansas City and Winfield in the south, Montgomery and Crawford County in the southeast, Ellis County to the West, Marshall County to the North and Atchison County to the Northeast.

As an organization that serves the entire state, we are requesting \$1.5 million to cover the rising cost of building materials in order to continue to build and repair homes for low-income individuals across Kansas.

- In the past two years, construction costs for affiliates have increased by an average of 30%.
- On May 1, 2020, lumber futures traded around \$256 per thousand board feet. On Oct 1, 2021, it was \$776. (<https://tradingeconomics.com/commodity/lumber>)
- Habitat for Humanity's model for providing low interest loans for individuals who make between 30%-80% of the area median income, is greatly affected by these rising costs.
- Affiliates have had to decrease the number of homes they have the capacity to build by 15%-30%.

Utilizing these funds, Habitat for Humanity affiliates across the state could build 50 additional homes to help create independence, stability and self-reliance and leave a legacy that impacts generations. With Habitat's current partnerships these funds could leverage more than \$3,550,000 of additional monies for a total impact of over \$5,550,000.

Not only do these funds support the homeowners and organizations, but the communities where these homes are built will also be impacted by an increase in property taxes.

- For example, Wichita Habitat has built 65 houses over a 7-year period in one of the city's most distressed areas. Before construction, property tax on those lots was approximately \$6,000. Those houses have paid almost \$60,000 in property taxes since being built.
- The 300 homeowners served by Wichita Habitat in the past 35 years pay approximately \$200,000 in property taxes annually.

I appreciate your time and ask that you support our proposal to provide funding to address the rising costs of building materials and construction of safe affordable homes in Kansas.

Shawna Dennett

Organizational Advancement Director



Office: 316.269.0755 x 112

Google Voice: 316-302-4848 (**USE THIS NUMBER**)

Fax: 316.264.1108

www.wichitahabitat.org

It's easy to DONATE to support affordable housing! Text "buildict" to 76278

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Doug Schmitt <doug.schmitt@soldiertownship.org>
Sent: Monday, October 18, 2021 1:55 PM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: ARPA Funds

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

We are contacting you on behalf of Soldier Township in Shawnee County in regards to the distribution of funds possibly held by the State of Kansas pursuant to the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund and the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund established under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). As you are no doubt aware, the Kansas Legislature voted to limit those funds received in Kansas under ARPA to counties and cities of the first, second and third class. Townships such as Soldier Township were not included in these distributions, and while we can understand the general rationale for such a decision, we feel it was certainly to the detriment of a township our size. As such we are writing to inquire whether you are currently looking for entities such as ours who have need for qualifying expenditures under ARPA, and if so, what steps we would need to take to apply for such funds held by the State.

Based on population figures, Soldier Township would be the 25th most populous municipality in the State. We are also the second largest municipality in the Topeka Metropolitan area. Serving 15,117 people (per 2019 census), we are by far the largest unincorporated Township in the State and provide services to more Kansans than a vast majority of the cities that are due to receive funding under ARPA. As an example, the city closest in population to Soldier Township would be Great Bend, with 14,974 citizens per that same census. Great Bend has been allocated over \$2.2 million dollars under the ARPA calculation.

Soldier Township operates a Road Department, a Fire Department and a Township Administration Department. We provide these services for Industrial, Commercial and Residential taxpayers whose combined assessed valuation for 2021 is \$167,924,085. By comparison, Great Bend's assessed valuation for 2021 is \$105,999,575. Our Road Department maintains 131 miles of paved streets and roads. Our Fire Department currently runs about 1150 fire and medical calls a year with 7 full time and 30 part time personnel. This year's total Township budget authority is \$3,328,472 and a levy rate of 16.530 mils.

In light of current ARPA requirements for approved funding, we have identified multiple projects we believe would definitively fall under those requirements. Two primary projects involve PPE shortcomings which became clear during our medical responses through the pandemic. The first project involves the need for a second set of gear for our firefighters to allow us to continue to serve our community while we decontaminate our current gear. The second project would be the replacement of our self-contained breathing apparatus for our respiratory protection equipment.

We truly appreciate your time and efforts in this matter, and it is our sincere hope that we are given the opportunity to demonstrate how a significant number of Kansans could benefit from Soldier Township's use of a portion of these ARPA funds.

Very Truly Yours,

SOLDIER TOWNSHIP

--

Doug Schmitt

Fire Chief

Soldier Township Fire Department

600 NW 46th Street

Topeka, KS 66617

Work: 785-286-2123

Fax: 785-286-2121

doug.schmitt@soldiertownship.org



Duty-Honor-Courage

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Bbthebookkeeper <bbthebookkeeper@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 19, 2021 9:30 AM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: COVID Relief Dollars

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

I feel the best way to help and the closest to be equal for everyone is for an equal amount to be paid toward all residential property taxes in the state. If the same amount was paid to each residential property no matter the value almost everyone would be treated the same. If the property was a rental property, hopefully the landlord would pass the savings to their renters. The schools, Counties and cities would still get their share to meet their budgets.

Thank You for listening

Betty Clarke

SPARK Executive Committee Testimony, Oct. 18, 2021
Wichita State University, Rhatigan Student Center
Danielle Johnson on Behalf of Wichita Habitat for Humanity

Good morning. Thank you for this opportunity to share about Habitat's work. I'm Danielle Johnson, the executive director of Wichita Habitat for Humanity.

For Habitat homeowners, reaching the goal of home ownership transforms lives. Every future homeowner puts in at least 250 hours of sweat equity, building homes of other Habitat homeowners and then their own. Couples work 400 hours in sweat equity. Included in this sweat equity are education classes including financial literacy. Recently a homeowner talked about how she used credit to buy things for her children. After taking the classes with Habitat, she realized that having a stable home was more important than material goods. She paid off her credit cards, saved a down payment and is now a homeowner.

After completing the courses, sweat equity and purchasing their home, more than 50% of our homeowners either receive a promotion or return to school for additional education including college degrees. We hear of families who bought tables for the first time and their families are eating dinner together in their dining room. Often families who partner with us didn't have a dining room in their rental house or apartment. If they did, they used it as a bedroom. This fall we met a volunteer on our building site who grew up in a Habitat home. Today he is a college graduate, in management at a major employer and volunteers to give back to his community. That's impact!

Pride in ownership continues to transform Kansas neighborhoods and lives. We urge you to approve this request for \$1.5 million in funds to further affordable home ownership throughout Kansas. Thank you for your consideration.

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Glen Tricia Glidewell <gglide_67226@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, October 17, 2021 11:38 AM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Cc: Tricia K Glidewell
Subject: How To Spend COVID Relief Dollars

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

From day one of the Federal Funding notice, my thought was to use the money to update, repair, enhance Kansas' computer systems for our states elections, unemployment, tax hurdles for hardware and software and their security. If anything good came out of this pandemic, it showed us our weaknesses and unpreparedness for many of these above mentioned needs.

Our state has unfortunately languished in the area of citizens many levels of securely of voting, receive unemployment without millions of dollars being paid out fraudulently and the KDR to maintain the ability to collect ALL citizens taxes that are due the state.

I am in no way saying our 2020 elections in KS were fraudulent, but that the ability to be certain that the ballots were mailed, returned and counted; that there was no hacking from any one domestic or internationally has been so questioned. If better safe-nets and security were in place there would be less skepticism all around.

Use the funds to upgrade, repair and enhance for any future situations like those seen during the recent pandemic.

Tricia Glidewell
Wichita, KS

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

SPARK Executive Committee Testimony, Oct. 18, 2021
Wichita State University, Rhatigan Student Center
Kathy Lefler on Behalf of Wichita Habitat for Humanity

Good morning. Thank you SPARK Executive Committee for taking your morning to listen to our testimony on the best uses for the ARPA funds. I'm Kathy Lefler and I am the communications and marketing manager for Wichita Habitat for Humanity.

Like the others on our staff and dedicated volunteers like Ann Patterson, I wake up every day excited and ready to serve families in need of affordable housing. They are people who have a need for decent housing, an ability to pay an affordable mortgage and a willingness to partner with us. On Friday, the parents of four children will purchase their Habitat home. Their monthly mortgage will be less than half what they now in rent.

This year, Wichita Habitat and the other Habitat affiliates across our state have been severely challenged to meet the rising need for affordable housing because of the rising cost of building materials.

The rising price of lumber captured many of the headlines earlier this year. On May 1, 2020, lumber futures traded around \$256 per thousand board feet. On Oct 1, 2021, it was \$776.
(<https://tradingeconomics.com/commodity/lumber>)

The prices on other building materials have wildly increased and affect Habitat's ability to build. At the same time, the need for affordable housing continues to grow. We serve households whose income is between 35-80% of the median income for Sedgwick County. Today, in Wichita, we have 24 qualified families ready to build Habitat homes.

The benefits of investing in affordable housing are widespread. They include a return of tax money to the taxpayers of Kansas. For example, Wichita Habitat has built 65 houses over a 7-year period in one of the city's most distressed areas. Before

construction, property tax on those lots was approximately \$6,000. Those houses have paid almost \$60,000 in property taxes since being built.

Habitat sells every house to our homeowners and they pay a mortgage just like any other homeowner – like you and me. The difference is that they pay no interest.

We have partnered with more than 300 families since we began in 1986. Those families – now homeowners across Sedgwick County – together pay about \$200,000 in property taxes annually.

This \$1.5 million dollars will be return to the community to build more homes. Thank you for your consideration.

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Doug Ittner <dittner1@cox.net>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 4:36 PM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: Input in spending of relief funds

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

I'd like to see some of the funding allocated towards rebates for purchasing energy efficient furnaces and air conditioners. Considering the higher costs of natural gas and electricity, providing funds to encourage upgrades in residential homes would save customers on their bills, reduce demand for fuels, and reduce the amount spent on heating assistance. Those with extremely low incomes can apply for higher subsidies of up to 100% of the furnace cost.

Doug Ittner
215 n. Charles
Wichita Kansas 67203

Miller, Sarah [GO]

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Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 4:36 PM
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Doug Ittner
215 n. Charles
Wichita Kansas 67203

SPARK COMMITTEE WRITTEN TESTIMONY

In Support of Scientific Based Reading Instruction
for

Children With Dyslexia and Other Struggling Readers

Presented by: Jeanine Phillips, Executive Director

Phillips Fundamental Learning Center, 2220 E. 21st St. North, Wichita, Ks. 67214, funlearn.org

October 20, 2021

An alarming statistic was reported by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), when it comes children in our Kansas School Systems; 66% in 2019 were reading below proficiency in the 4th grade. And as a result of COVID-19, this statistic is going to worsen over the next several years. Our children's futures are right now threatened by the fact our educational system has failed to comprehend the fact most children must be taught differently than they have been. How we've continued to teach children to read, to write, and to spell hasn't worked. The irony behind this statement is Kansas has had access to proven scientific methods that were implemented for children who are dyslexic (National Institutes of Child Health & Development, NICHD) since 2000. The proven methods, including how to teach our educators to teach children to read, works not just for children with dyslexia, but for most all children who struggle to learn this critical skill. This is what our teacher reparation professionals at Phillips Fundamental Learning Center have specialized in for more than 20 years. We are now at a critical time when our focus must be on the scientific evidence that guides not only how we design our schools, but furthermore what and when we teach the foundational skills of reading, writing and spelling. This is going to take a huge investment on the part of the Great State of Kansas. I can't think of a better way to focus SPARK funding.

For 21 years, Phillips Fundamental Learning Center's (PFLC) Board of Directors, our organization's administrators, staff, parents and teachers have been concerned and have pressed our Kansas' Dept. of Education to focus on NICHD's educational research for both the identification of dyslexia as well as professional instruction for those who teach children to read, whether they are dyslexic or struggle to learn to read for other reasons. Our literacy intensive training courses are nationally accredited by the International Multisensory Structured Language Council and our dyslexia practitioners and therapists are encouraged to certify with the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) or with the International Dyslexia Association once they finish the required rigorous coursework and mentored practicum instructional hours. We speak from experience when we say extensive literacy reparation is what is required to change the lives of children who fail to learn to read.

Please take rigorous literacy reparation programs into consideration as funds are distributed by the Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas (SPARK) Committee. We must prioritize appropriate literacy instruction in Kansas for the sake of our children's future.

Respectfully submitted by: Jeanine Phillips, Executive Director of Phillips Fundamental Learning Center. jphillips@funlearn.org

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: dsmith umopendoor.org <dsmith@umopendoor.org>
Sent: Monday, October 18, 2021 12:21 PM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: SPARK Testimonial

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Good afternoon. I would like to submit the following testimonial for the SPARK Executive Committee. I am sorry I was unable to attend this morning's session.

The pressing issue Open Door is facing is untreated mental health and/or substance use disorders. When clients are finally lucid enough to say yes to treatment, the wait for an appointment is significant. If they do get an assessment and found to need in-patient treatment, finding a treatment bed is difficult and only short term. Also, most are uninsured which complicates matters even more. Many people are left loitering or camping on the streets with behavioral issues escalating due to the untreated illnesses. Complaints have risen from business members/residents in the downtown area.

Thank you for your consideration

Deann Smith

Executive Director/ United Methodist Open Door
P.O. Box 2756 / 402 E. Second St. North
Wichita, KS 67201 – 2756
316-265-9371
www.umopendoor.org

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: DANA HENSLEY <dhensley7@cox.net>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 9:43 AM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: SPARK Requests

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Spark Committee:

I am a board member and co-chair of Fundamental Learning Center's [FLC] Transforming Education capital campaign. I do this because Kansas has a reading crisis. The latest national data tell us that 67% of Kansas fourth graders do not read proficiently at grade level. The impact of Covid will only make this worse. FLC assesses children for dyslexia, offers a day school for children with profound dyslexia and provides teachers and parents with classes that enable them to teach these children how to read.

One in five people have dyslexia and it is genetic. We are wait-listed at our school and our new facility will allow us to double our enrollment and through new technology, will allow us to provide teacher training to school districts throughout Kansas and beyond.

We have raised the initial goal of \$20,000,000 but Covid-related costs and the desire for more scholarship funds has led us to create a new \$4,000,000 goal.

Imagine, for a moment, not being able to read a prescription label, fill out a bank loan application or read safety signs at a place of employment. The US Justice Department says that crime is welded to reading failure. Please help us give these children the tools they need to return to their neighborhood school with the skills to read and succeed.

I would be very happy to provide more information and detail at your request.

Dana Hensley

Dhensley7@cox.net

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Matthew Tannehill <matthewt@lange.us.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 2:55 PM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: SPARK testimony

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Representatives of the SPARK Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on what we believe is a unique and transformational way in which ARPA discretionary funds can be utilized to help the citizens of Kansas.

I work for the Lange Community Foundation as the Director of Strategic Initiatives. Our mission is to serve as a catalyst for the community of Wichita and the surrounding area by creating a transformational Behavioral Health Campus that helps individuals and families who face challenges of mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness (all of which have been exacerbated by COVID-19) receive the much needed wraparound services of care that lead to healing and recovery.

Our goal is to be a strategic collaborator and partner with the local healthcare, social service, government and business providers in our area to bring servicing organizations and those in need, out from the urban core of downtown Wichita and to a location 10 minutes south that will allow for the creation of an effective and efficient system of care that addresses each individual's unique needs and their root causes of homelessness from intake to recovery to long-term self-sufficiency. This campus will utilize the partnerships with well-established organizations to coordinate services such as case management, emergency sheltering, medical, dental and mental health care, housing services, education and workforce development as well as many of the basic need services an individual needs to feel provided for while on their path to recovery and stabilization.

This is a multimillion dollar project that will need funds to help create the campus, relocate critical providers to the service location, establish the technology enhancement needed for collaborative communication as well as the resources needed for implementation of program services. This model has proven to be successful for the city of San Antonio TX through their program, Haven for Hope. Our ask is that we are awarded \$25 million dollars through the help of SPARK funds to join in creating the model that will work best for the City of Wichita. We have multiple partners that have committed to this effort financially through gifts and investments. We know we can leverage these SPARK Funds to use the investment Sedgwick County, the City of Wichita, Ascension and many others are already making into a much more sustainable impact.

We are communicating with multiple entities within our community that we hope will join on this initiative either financially or programmatically. One firm commitment is from HealthCore, a medical, dental and behavior health provider in the Wichita area. This is a unique opportunity for the state of Kansas to help Kansans recover from the impacts of COVID while also being strategic in creating a new system that enhances our ability to address the root causes of homelessness. There are several organizations that do amazing work for our community. We hope to be the entity that helps bring these services together to allow for a more efficient and connective upstream approach on how we address homelessness, substance abuse, and mental health.

Thank you,
Matthew Tannehill

Naquela Pack
419 S. Elpyco
Wichita, KS 67128
Naquela.pack@wichita.edu

Spark Testimony

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted every facet of our economy and economic revitalization efforts through an equitable lens can provide opportunities to positively impact outcomes to the quality of life and overall wellbeing of our state. The city of Wichita's survey of potential uses for ARPA funds indicated affordable housing and small business/workforce support as a top need. My testimony is that creation of and access to down payment assistance programs and funding for organizations like Kansas Habitat for Humanity will go along way. One of the top supports for small businesses needed are micro loans, specifically for start-ups. Incentivizing and/or providing safety nets for banks to comfortably do so may increase the approval rates. Many of the current micro-loan programs say intended for start-up, but how many actually get approved is limited, if any. Joblessness continues to fall disproportionately on lower-wage workers in the service sector and on African Americans and Hispanics. For this a shift to skills training and retraining opportunities around tech, AI, automation, and programming would help.

Additional economic revitalization efforts are needed for:

- Data driven solutions
- Students' continuation of access to higher education.
- Access to mental/behavior health care.
- Neighborhood (re)development

These plans will need to account for cultural adaptation of the programs content and that representation of minorities are among the intervention group leaders. While also addressing the fundamental underlying issues of racial accessibility for African Americans and other marginalized groups.

Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) can be the catalyst in data informed research to analyze disparities as a function of race. Many reports say 'n/a' where indicator points from marginalized groups would sit. Additionally, expansion of recent funding to allow for any component of the student's cost of attendance or emergency costs due to the coronavirus to be supplemented. Prioritizing grants to students with exceptional need, such as Pell recipient students and outreach initiatives to these recipients.

Outreach initiatives can be launched to alleviate the negative impacts of covid on Kansans like the Kansas Beats the Virus campaign and Wichita Black Alliance's #FactsNotFearICT campaign that worked to educate, inform, connect, and provide resources to marginalized and unique audiences.

Studies find that mental health care intervention models that successfully integrate mental health care into primary care enhanced capacity for health behavior changes and

could have a significant public health impact. Mental health care also addresses the ongoing fears of the virus. An effort to expand programs like the WISE Clinic at Wichita State, that offer no cost counseling to the community, could partner with county health departments and primary care physicians for referrals to their mental health care services.

Strengthening neighborhoods through partner projects that are designed to address the greatest economic development needs that have arisen in Kansas since March 2020 should include:

- Repair, or renovation of real property
- Building construction
- Landscaping and streetscaping
- Demolition and site preparation
- Predesign and design
- Engineering
- Infrastructure
- Related site amenities

Attention to these efforts would vastly revitalize the economic ecosystem within the State of Kansas.

October 19, 2021
814 N. Woodridge Drive
Wichita, KS 67206

Re: Comment on Kansas SPARK funds

Dear SPARK Executive Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity for public comment on this matter. My main concerns relate to health, safety and public welfare.

As a board member of one of the state's largest long term care facilities I can attest that some of the greatest impact of Co-vid 19 has been to said entities. As by far the largest number of fatalities have been to the aged, so too, the numerous organizations that serve them have suffered some of the greatest expense, and greatest prolonged stress throughout the pandemic. I ask that you give special attention to the health care sector and the requests coming from their representatives.

Secondly, while many of us have hopes for national infrastructure funding, some of the state's road conditions are at best deplorable and at worst unsafe. For example, there is a section of I-35 northeast lane, I believe between mile markers 170 and 183, where one has to hold tightly to one's steering wheel just to keep the vehicle in the proper lane. And the public rest stop nearby is just an embarrassment, very unwelcoming to those stopping there.

Third, businesses and society in general would benefit from support and improvements to child day care centers.

Fourth any directed help to support Afghan refugees to resettle or address the growing homeless population would be appreciated.

Thank you for reading this and God bless you in your endeavors.

Sincerely yours,

Thomas M. Church
tpchurch@cox.net

Through internal and community surveys, focus groups, and an ongoing online needs assessment, where we asked citizens to prioritize how they would spend ARPA funds, Sedgwick County has identified the following needs as we continue to respond to, and recover from, the pandemic. A universal refrain from participants at all levels was that all recipients of ARPA funding must collaborate and work together to assure maximum effectiveness of the utilization of the funds. Given the once in a lifetime opportunity to have a lasting impact, cooperation and planning is crucial.

Continuing to provide no cost vaccinations, boosters and testing has been nearly universally identified by survey and focus group participants as crucial to full economic recovery and re-opening of businesses. ARPA funds are designed for recovery from the pandemic, but the County has been forced to use its direct ARPA allocation for continued response to the pandemic.

Many small businesses and non-profit organizations stated that operating support or other assistance to help them reopen and stay open safely would be critical to get through 2022. The primary concern many employers stressed continues to be around workforce challenges. The need to attract new, skilled workers demanding higher pay, benefits & ability to work remotely; as well as funding to purchase additional technology and training to expand on-line retail, and promote travel/tourism. Finally, providing premium pay to essential workers, both in the public and private sector was prioritized.

Additional support for expanded child care services is needed to assist the re-entry into the workforce. Day care facilities have been slow to reopen due to inspection and licensing backlogs. Providers are facing upward wage pressure and demand for non-traditional hours of child care; predominately from health care workers.

Demand for mental health services has increased significantly. While, the workforce challenges previously cited, have reduced providers' capacity to deliver. COVID related stressors, from economic and financial setbacks, health issues, isolation, housing instability, domestic violence, substance abuse, and grief due to loss of family and friends, have placed strains on the capacity of the continuum of mental health care.

Community violence intervention programs; specifically related to providing housing stability by reducing homelessness, developing affordable housing, and offering housing counseling is also a top concern.

Leaders of the smaller cities in Sedgwick County, with direct ARPA allocations, totaling approximately \$12 million are interested in pursuing braided funding for infrastructure. Water and sewer projects that universally cost more than their direct ARPA funding were most often cited. Interest in expanding broadband access to underserved areas of the County is also critically needed for a robust, sustained economic recovery.

Sedgwick County's approved ARPA spending plan allocates almost \$43 Million; 43% of our direct funding to support the continuing public health response, address court backlog and public safety, and support essential public employees with premium pay. While we have additional ARPA funds coming, effectively addressing the community priorities will require additional resources. We hope to partner with Federal and State entities to maximize the positive impact for our citizens.

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Sarah Collins <scollins@funlearn.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 10:33 AM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: The RIGHT help for struggling Kansas readers

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

It's on the list of calls no parent ever wants to get. The call from school informing you that your child isn't performing up to standards and is falling behind. For many parents this begins a long, painful, and costly journey to find answers. Sadly, for many, the answers simply aren't there. This was true for me six years ago when my son was falling far behind his peers in learning to read. After seeing numerous specialists, doctors, and counselors, we were finally directed to the Phillips Fundamental Learning Center where we found out why he wasn't learning and what could be done to help him. We knew that if he didn't learn to read he would never be able to read to learn. For the **1 in 5 kids who are dyslexic**, like my son, learning to read is a tremendous struggle. While every struggling reader does not have this diagnosis, still **66% of Kansas kids are not reading on grade level** by fourth grade. I cannot imagine how much worse this number will be after these children have spent the better part of two years of disrupted learning due to COVID.

Fundamental Learning Center has put decades worth of research into finding the most effective method to teach kids how to read, write, and spell. When my son started there in first grade he only knew the letters of his first name. By the end of his time there he was reading Harry Potter out loud to me. Today he is in seventh grade at a traditional school and making straight A's. If PFLC can teach my profoundly dyslexic child to successfully read then I know their methods will work for *any* struggling reader. Kansas kids will desperately need help in the coming years and PFLC has the knowledge, history, and resources to make a tremendous difference. Our kids deserve the best education possible after all they have been through. The Spark funds are intended to help them overcome the damage done by the past two years and I can think of no better way than providing them with a proven, science-driven method for reading instruction. Phillips Fundamental Learning Center is ready now to train teachers to do exactly what they did for my son — provide hope and a bright future.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sarah Collins - Parent of two Kansas kids
wacoscollins@gmail.com

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Martha Juliene <mccbaehr@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 14, 2021 9:17 PM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: SPARK

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Mr. Belshe,

In my opinion, the population of Kansas which has been most affected and, at the same time least considered, are senior citizens. Senior citizens who cannot do for themselves as they once did, and who must pay for help, deliveries, etc., are the least able to pay for these things. Many older people live on fixed incomes and are the most affected by the huge increase in natural gas and food prices currently occurring.

The COLA from Social Security will be swamped by these increased costs and will have virtually no benefit. As an older woman, who was hoping to retire, said to Sharice Davids on her recent town hall phone call, "What are you going to do for us?". We don't need a commission or another program, or more bureaucracy, just send some of the cash to us and let us decide what to do with it, please.

Sincerely,

Martha C. Baehr

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Bill Maxwell <maxwellbill1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 14, 2021 10:46 PM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Subject: To those Kansans who need assistance.

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

EXTERNAL: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open any attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Committee Members.

It's my firm belief that fully one quarter of the available funds should go to Kansas families in need. Families who through no fault of their own find themselves without a home, or enough food for their children, or in need of clothing or medical care. It's time-it's always been time to look out for those less fortunate. Do not forget them.

Thank you,
Bill Maxwell
Roeland Park, KS.

Sent from my iPhone

V. Kaye Monk-Morgan, EdD
4701 E. English
Wichita, KS 67218

October 19, 2021

Mr. Ethan Belshe, Legislative Liaison
Office of Recovery
Kansas Governor Laura Kelly
Eisenhower State Office Building

Mr. Belshe,

Please except the following as my written testimony to the SPARK Executive Committee
SPARK funds are intended to link today's health and economic needs to the health and economic opportunities of tomorrow. In order for that linkage to work, Kansas has to reinvest to sustain the results of the previous investments related to health and the economy. A few areas that are priorities in Wichita in general and specifically those areas with the greatest needs include educational opportunities to support learning and remediation for children whose success was hampered by the impacts of COVID, mental health services focused in areas where the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic were most detrimental, and moderately priced housing options.

- Educational opportunities to remediate learning for K-12 students who suffered learning loss as a result of virtual or negatively impacted in-person learning. Helping students recover academically and build math and reading skills should be a priority. Funds for additional personnel and to incentivize participation in summer and afterschool programs. Incentivizing learning bootcamps or programs could help a high school student who needs to work to make ends meet, make the choice to invest time in playing academic catch up.

Affordable childcare and expanded early childhood development are also key to our recovery. Not only will funding to support early childhood learning help prepare students for academic careers and ultimately the workforce, but good childcare also supports working parents who require help to maintain their engagement with the workforce.

Strengthening broadband in low-income and heavily minoritized populations also supports both children in their academic recovery, but also provides parents access to employment that is now performed remotely.

- Housing, not just rental stock, but homes for single families are in great need in Wichita and rural Kansas too. Renovating current stock to improve conditions, perhaps in partnership with Habitat for Humanity or Mennonite Housing could greatly improve the stock, especially in

economically depressed areas. Additionally, incentivizing home ownership by expanding programs that assist with the initial costs of purchase.

- Mental Health Services for low and moderate-income families who may not have access based on insurance. Setting aside funds so clinicians can adopt sliding fee scales. Additional support for current clinics so that they can expand service delivery and provide services in locations where they are needed. Perhaps mobile mental health clinics in highly populated venues.
- Financial resources to fund a high risk pool for health coverage. The long term impacts of COVID have not yet been realized. Physical and mental services will be needed for those with and without health coverage for years to come. Providing additional funding for current and future needs.

The economic ecosystem in Kansas has suffered unprecedented disruption. Supply chain issues, food deserts, and racial inequities have all been exacerbated by this pandemic. Well placed investments in areas such as these are needed to repair the system in the short term and strengthen and expand opportunities in the future.

With appreciation for the opportunity,



Valencia K. Monk-Morgan

Miller, Sarah [GO]

From: Belshe, Ethan S [GO]
Sent: Thursday, October 21, 2021 8:51 AM
To: Miller, Sarah [GO]
Cc: Arif, Samir [DA]
Subject: FW: Wichita Written Testimony
Attachments: 2015 CCC Cost Avoidance Study.pdf; 2017 CCC Cost Avoidance Study.pdf; 2018 CCC Cost Avoidance Study.pdf; 2021 October SPARK Committee Testimony Letter.pdf; 2021-10-18 SPARKS Exec. Committee.doc; A Rural Mental Health Crisis (4).pdf; Ann Patterson Habitat Spark Testimony.docx; ARPA Funds; ARPA Funds; COVID Relief Dollars; Danielle Johnson Habitat Spark testimony.docx; GWKS Statement to SPARK Committee Final 10.19.21.pdf; Heartspring SPARK Written Testimony Oct 20 2021.pdf; How To Spend COVID Relief Dollars; Input in spending of relief funds; Kathy Lefler Habitat Spark Testimony.docx; Oct 2021 AHA Letter ARPA Appropriations_SPARK.pdf; SPARK COMMITTEE WRITTEN TESTIMONY.docx; SPARK Requests; SPARK Testimonial; SPARK testimony ; Spark Testimony.docx; SPARK Written Testimony - ARPA - Sedgwick County.docx; SPARK.docx; SPARK; The RIGHT help for struggling Kansas readers; To those Kansans who need assistance.; Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition Funding Recommendation 10.18.21.pdf; VKM_SPARK funds Testimony.docx; Written Testimony on ARPA Funds for SPARK Executive Committee

Good morning Sarah. Attached is all of the written testimony from the Wichita meeting for the website. Let me know if you need anything else from me.

From: Belshe, Ethan S [GO] <Ethan.S.Belshe@ks.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, October 20, 2021 5:19 PM
To: Belshe, Ethan S [GO] <Ethan.S.Belshe@ks.gov>
Subject: Wichita Written Testimony

SPARK Executive Committee Members,

Please see attached written testimony submitted by the public for the Wichita regional meeting.

If you have any questions please let me know.

Thanks,

Ethan Belshe | Legislative Liaison
Office of Recovery
Kansas Governor Laura Kelly
Eisenhower State Office Building
785-250-7355 cell
785-296-1580 office

Thank you for taking your morning to listen to us My name is Ann Patterson and I currently serve as a volunteer the Kansas Habitat Homes Advisory Council, on the Board of Wichita Habitat for Humanity, and the National Habitat for Humanity Advocacy Council.

The Kansas Habitat Homes Advisory Council is made up of Habitat affiliates across the state including Wichita, Topeka, Lawrence and the greater Kansas City area and we request \$1.5 million to cover the rising cost of building materials. Using these funds, we would leverage more than \$3,550,000 of additional monies for a total impact of over \$5,550,000.

If granted these funds, we would build 50 homes. These are homes that create independence, stability and their impact lasts for generations.

Housing for lower middle-income families is an allowable use of ARPA funds. The Interim Final Rule written by the Department of the Treasury on page 39 places an emphasis on meeting the needs of disproportionately impacted communities. The list of eligible uses includes the **development of affordable housing to increase supply of affordable and high-quality living units**

The families who partner with us to purchase Habitat homes are part of the disproportionately affected communities. They include workers who prior to COVID-19 worked at businesses like daycares, hair salons, restaurants, retail stores, hotels, gyms, building cleaning companies, & travel call centers. Many were self-employed. Most lived paycheck to paycheck before COVID and continue to do so now. The challenges they face make their lives unstable and affect their housing choices.

This year, the Habitat affiliates across our state have been severely challenged by the rising cost of building materials. On May 1, 2020, lumber futures traded around \$256 per thousand board feet. On Oct 1, 2021, it was \$776.

(<https://tradingeconomics.com/commodity/lumber>) The prices on other building materials have wildly increased and affect Habitat's ability to build. At the same time, the need for affordable housing continues to grow. Today, in Wichita, we have 24 qualified families ready to build Habitat homes. Thank you for your consideration.



*Sedgwick County...
working for you*

COMCARE

A Licensed Community Mental Health Center and Certified Addiction Treatment Program

271 W. Third St. N., Suite 600, Wichita, KS 67202 - www.sedgwickcounty.org - TEL: 316-660-7600 - FAX: 316-660-7510

Joan M. Tammany, LMLP
Executive Director

Testimony to the SPARK Executive Committee – Wichita, October 18, 2021

Good morning Chair and members of the SPARK Executive Committee. My name is Joan Tammany, and I am the Executive Director of COMCARE, the community mental health center serving Sedgwick County. Thank you for allowing me to testify today on behalf of behavioral health needs in our community.

COMCARE has been on the front line of the pandemic, serving the most vulnerable persons with behavioral health needs in our community. This includes those in crisis, adults with severe and persistent mental illness and youth with severe emotional disturbances. We have done a lot to better serve the under and uninsured but there is more need to be met. We are lacking outpatient medical detox and we have critical staffing shortages. Funding to implement medical detox along with scholarships, incentives and/or tuition reimbursement for employees choosing to work at safety net community mental health and/or substance abuse provider agencies will be important as more people who cannot pay out of pocket or with commercial insurance seek help. Many behavioral health specialists left the workforce during COVID due to their own mental health struggles or pursued work with less complex populations to work full time telehealth, private practice, or organizations with ability to pay substantially higher salaries not possible at a safety net clinic. Given the high need of those without insurance, there should be incentives to recruit and retain those choosing to be public servants and work with the neediest in our communities.

Also important are sufficiently funding crisis centers and co-responder models of mobile crisis services that are critical for adequately addressing the needs in our community yet have limited start up or reimbursement opportunity. Untreated mental illness and substance abuse is incredibly expensive and impacts not only my center and other provider agencies, but law enforcement, the detention facilities, and our hospitals. Cost avoidance studies completed by the Public Policy Management Center at WSU indicates that our crisis center saved the community, state, and hospitals about \$10 million dollars on average each year since implementation in 2015. So, we know we have a strong model here in Sedgwick County that if expanded can add even greater value. Our diversion rate from state hospitalizations to community resources since the moratorium was imposed at Osawatomie State Hospital is impressive and saved lives of those in need of crisis and wrap around supports.

Ability to be creative and develop new options to meet the demand of behavioral health need in our community will results in increasing access to quality behavioral health services at the least restrictive level of care. I am proud to work in a community that is looking forward and trying to develop sustainable solutions and with adequate funding to pilot innovation local solutions. We have multiple groups that meet regularly to form alliances and fill gaps, including the mental health and substance abuse coalition, yet the need remains high. Thank you for your consideration of these asks.



KANSAS RESPIRATORY CARE SOCIETY

520 E. Berry, Rose Hill, KS 67133

Esteemed Members of the Kansas Finance Committee and the Executive Committee of the Strengthening People and Revitalizing Kansas taskforce, Members of the Sub-Committees:

Governor Laura Kelly, Lieutenant Governor David Toland

Senators: Ty Masterson, Larry Alley, Dinah Sykes, Carolyn McGinn

Representatives: Ron Ryckman, Daniel Hawkins, Tom Sawyer, Troy Waymaster

Secretary of Administration - DeAngela Burns-Wallace,

Public Members - Jon Rolph, Greg Orman, Bill Pickert:

October 20, 2021

I am writing to you as President of the Kansas Respiratory Care Society, a Society formed in 1974 to educate, advocate, and promote the profession and practice of Respiratory Care in the State of Kansas. As the President of the Kansas Respiratory Care Society, I am advocating for the 2,071 Respiratory Therapists in Kansas, along with the Kansas Healthcare industry.

I was unable to make it to the public hearing on Monday in Wichita to give public opinion with regards to distribution of the \$1.6 billion dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act.

While we are appreciative of the \$50 million dollars or 3.125% of \$1.6 billion dollars, issued a few weeks ago to nurses and other frontline healthcare workers, I would like to review the math.

Federal guidelines for extra pay state no more than \$13.00 per hour or \$25,000 per year. That amount of money could possibly help keep nurses and other frontline healthcare workers from leaving our State to join the corps of traveling nurses and therapists throughout the country. Or even keep them from leaving healthcare altogether. So, I ask can \$50 million come anywhere close to Federal guidelines?

In 2020 the Kansas State Board of nursing listed:

470	Clinical Nurse Specialist
63	Licensed Mental Health Technician
496	Licensed Practical Nurse - Multi-State
9,838	Licensed Practical Nurse - Single-State
94	Nurse Midwife
5,153	Nurse Practitioner
5,251	Registered Nurse - Multi-State
52,657	Registered Nurse - Single-State
1,171	Registered Nurse Anesthetist
75,193	Total

If we only count RNs and LPNs we have 68,242 nurses. From national data we know approximately 60% of all nurses work in hospitals at the bedside, so that is 40,945 nurses working in hospitals. Let's see what \$50 million per hospital nurse works out to.

$\$50,000,000 / 40,945 = \$1,221.15$ per nurse. An hourly raise of (let's divide \$1221.15 by the number of hours to work 40 hours per week 52 weeks per year without overtime) $\$1,221.15 / 2080$ hours per year = \$0.59 per hour.

Now I ask what about the other frontline healthcare workers in our State who are supposed to benefit from the \$50 million dollars?

Data from the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts and the KSBN:



KANSAS RESPIRATORY CARE SOCIETY

520 E. Berry, Rose Hill, KS 67133

11,514 Medical Doctors
1,873 Osteopathic Doctors
1,460 Physician Assistants
5,153 Nurse Practitioners
2,071 Respiratory Therapists
3,827 Radiologic Technologists
1,902 Occupational Therapists
942 OTAs
3,418 Physical Therapists
2,103 PTAs
34,263 Total

34,263 other frontline healthcare workers. Some of these professions are less than 50% hospital based and others like Rad Techs and RTs are over 70% so let's just limit the 34,263 by 50% or 17,131.

40,945 nurses + 17,131 frontline healthcare workers in Kansas = 58,076

$\$50,000,000 / 58,076 = \860.94 per person or a raise of $\$861 / 2080$ hour per year no overtime = $\$0.41$ cents per hour. Or to put it another way, 3.15% of the Federal Guidelines of $\$13.00/\text{hour}$.

Now I ask you to put yourself in the place of these 58,076 fellow Kansans who have worked diligently, persevering through this pandemic, would a raise of $\$0.41$ cents per hour keep you from packing your bags and traveling to other areas of the country in need of nurses, respiratory therapists, physicians, etc.? Would it keep you from leaving your healthcare career in pursuit of a less stressful vocation?

To get close to the federal guidelines it would take $58,076 \times \$25,000 = \1.45 billion dollars. Obviously using 90% of the Federal funds is not practical, but neither is 3.125%. Our healthcare system may never recover from this pandemic. It very well could be the proverbial straw that broke the fragile healthcare industries back. The stories you are hearing about full hospitals, critical staffing shortages, Critical Access Hospitals sending patients out of state, supply shortages, etc., are all very true.

Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Senators, Representatives, and public members: Our urban hospitals are hurting. Our urban hospital struggles are impacting our rural and critical access hospitals who are now hurting. We need your help to retain our staff. You have the power to look past party lines and look at the people of Kansas who are suffering from this pandemic. You have the purse-strings to look past the conservative and liberal stances of this pandemic. You have the benevolence and self-sacrifice to run for public office to support the people of Kansas and to serve on these committees. I petition you to recognize the profession of Respiratory Therapy in your future distribution of pandemic funds along with the other healthcare providers suffering through this pandemic. I ask you to do so with genuine altruism to those of us on the front lines of this battle. Look past all the mistrust and misinformation. Think of providing the best care for the Kansans suffering from COVID-19 respiratory failure by providing the best possible scenario for those Kansans staying in Kansas to provide care to their fellow Kansans.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely

Curtis Kidwell, RN, RRT

President of the Kansas Respiratory Care Society

<https://www.kracs.org>

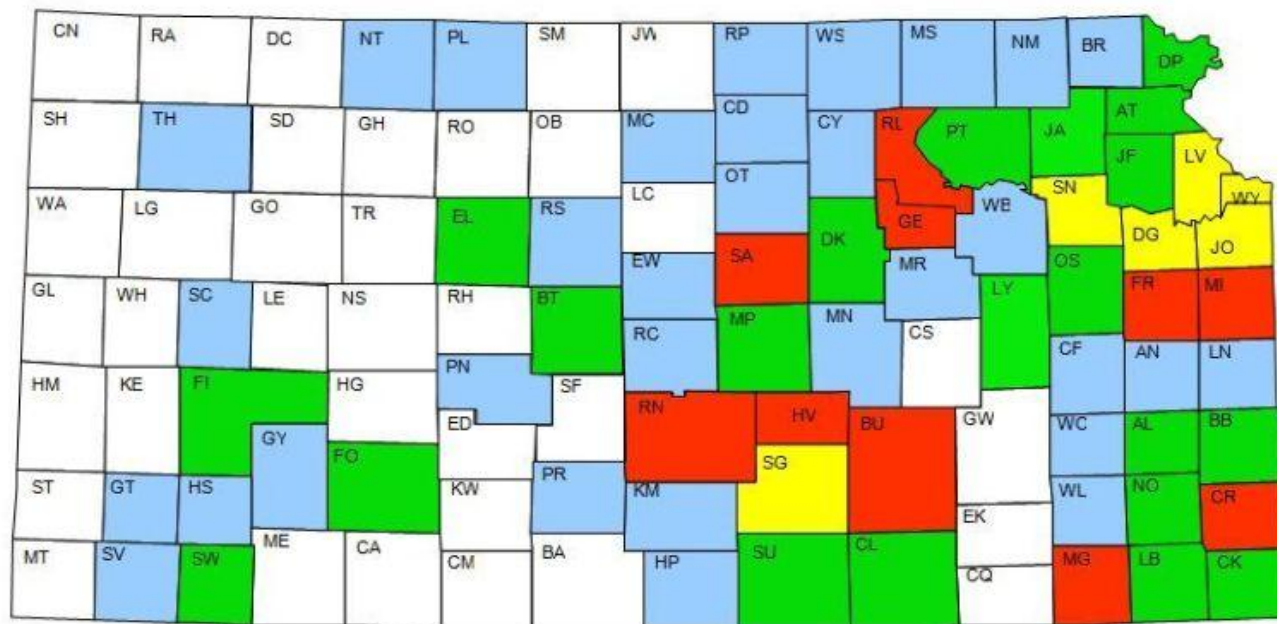
<https://www.facebook.com/KsRespCareSociety>

A Rural Mental Health Crisis

Community Needs in a COVID Pandemic

[Shawnee County Mercy Advocates, Inc.](#)

Kansas Peer County Groups



Urban - 150.0 or more persons per square mile



Semi-Urban - 40.0 - 149.9 persons per square mile



Densely-Settled Rural - 20.0 - 39.9 persons per square mile



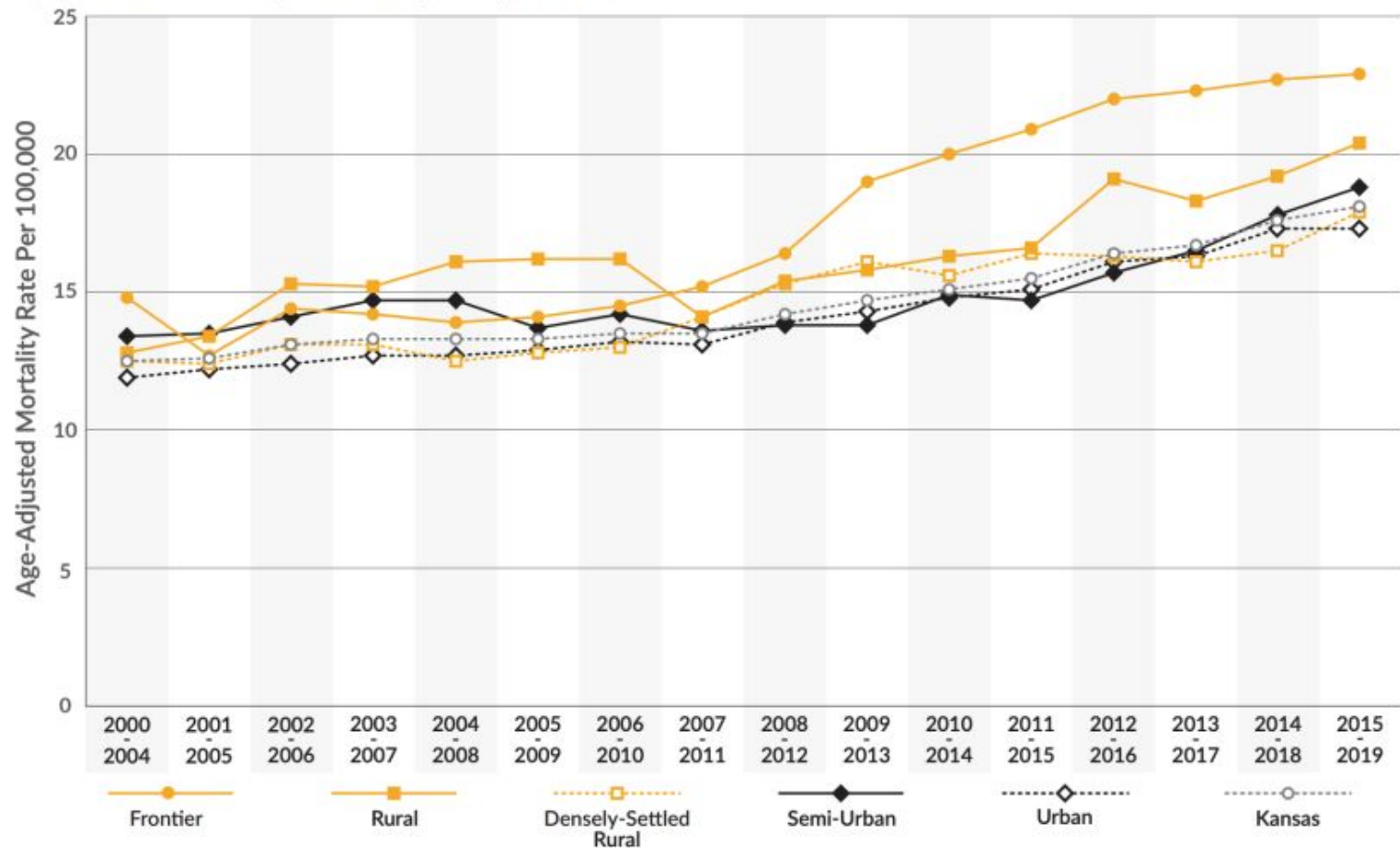
Rural - 6.0 - 19.9 persons per square mile



Frontier - Less than 6.0 persons per square mile

Source Data - 2010 US Census Data
 Prepared by Bureau of Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics
 Corrected 5-29-2012 to reflect Doniphan County as Densely-Settled Rural

Figure 1. Suicide Rate by Peer County Group, Kansas, 2000-2019



Note: Data were aggregated to five years due to small sample size. All rates are age-adjusted to the U.S. 2000 standard population.

Source: KHI analysis of Kansas Information for Communities data, 2000-2019.

Rural Mental Health Challenges

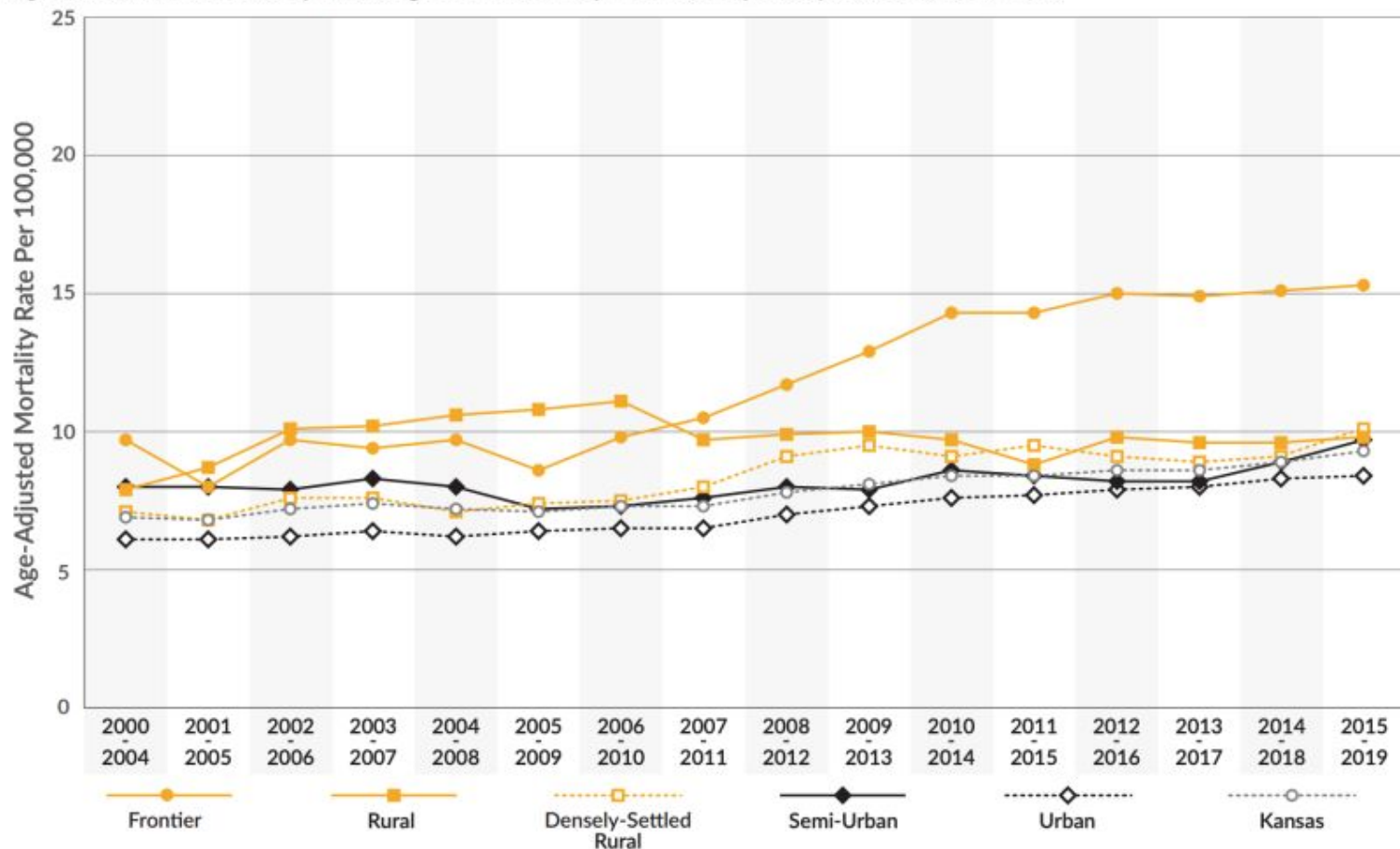
1. Increased suicide-by-firearm deaths
2. Increasing secure transport costs
3. Staff shortages

1. Increased Suicide-By-Firearm Deaths: 2000 - 2019

- Suicide rates climbed in rural and frontier counties by 55% and 60%.
- Frontier counties had increased rates of suicide with firearms.
- Suicide-by-firearm rate in frontier counties is more than 1.5 times higher than rural counties.

[Rural Suicide Rates Are Rising In Kansas And Solutions Won't Come Easy](#)

Figure 2. Rate of Suicide by Discharge of Firearms by Peer County Group, Kansas, 2000-2019



Note: Data were aggregated to five years due to small sample size. All rates are age-adjusted to the U.S. 2000 standard population.
Source: KHI analysis of Kansas Information for Communities data, 2000-2019.

1. Addressing Suicide-By-Firearm Deaths

Potential locations for 'Kansas Suicide Prevention Hotline' signage:

- Gun shops
- Shooting ranges
- Gun Shows
- Pawn shops

Promote safe storage of firearms when in crisis:

- [Vermont "Gun Shop Project"](#)
- [Colorado's "Gun Shop Project"](#)

2. Increasing Secure Transport Costs

- Saint Catherine's Hospital closed their adult/child psychiatric unit to manage COVID patients.
- Community Mental Health Centers in Hays, Garden City and Liberal compete for beds in Wichita.
- Secure transport involves 4 hour drives for patients in crisis.
- Secure transport costs are paid out of pocket by community mental health centers.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds

Subtitle H—Mental Health And Substance Use Disorder

SEC. 2707. FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY-BASED FUNDING FOR LOCAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH NEEDS.

(a) In General.—In addition to amounts otherwise available, there is appropriated to the Secretary for fiscal year 2021, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$50,000,000, to remain available until expended, to carry out the purpose described in subsection (b).

(b) Use Of Funds.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, shall award grants to State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, Tribal organizations, nonprofit community-based entities, and primary care and behavioral health organizations to address increased community behavioral health needs worsened by the COVID–19 public health emergency.

(2) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—**Grant funds awarded under this section to eligible entities shall be used for promoting care coordination among local entities; training the mental and behavioral health workforce, relevant stakeholders, and community members; expanding evidence-based integrated models of care; addressing surge capacity for mental and behavioral health needs; providing mental and behavioral health services to individuals with mental health needs (including co-occurring substance use disorders) as delivered by behavioral and mental health professionals utilizing telehealth services; and supporting, enhancing, or expanding mental and behavioral health preventive and crisis intervention services.**

2. Addressing Secure Transport Costs

Allocate ARPA dollars to compensate community mental health centers for secure transport expenses.

3. Staff Shortages

“A shortage of mental health providers in rural Kansas is concerning to some people. There are less than 5 psychiatrists serving adults in all of western Kansas and children with severe mental health needs have to travel hundreds of miles. “

[Mental Health Provider Shortage In Rural Kansas](#)

3. Addressing Staff Shortages

- Allocate ARPA dollars for bonus incentives to draw workforce.
- Allocate ARPA dollars for generous relocation packages.

Many thanks to:

Wyatt Beckman, Kansas Health Institute

David Condos, Kansas News Service

Janet Flanigan-Kastle, Shawnee County Mercy Advocates, Inc.

Quincy Bocquin, Shawnee County Mercy Advocates, Inc.



Goodwill Industries of Kansas, Inc.

Wichita, KS • 3351 N. Webb Road, 67226 • P.O. Box 8169, 67208 | Phone: 316.744.9291 • Fax: 316.744.1428
goodwillks.org • facebook.com/GoodwillKS • Instagram: @GoodwillKS

SPARK Committee

Statement from Goodwill Industries of Kansas October 15, 2021

Goodwill Industries of Kansas recognizes that available, affordable child care and reliable, timely transportation are the two most consistent barriers impeding the success of those we serve and employ.

In July, the Wichita Business Journal reported that Sedgwick County has seen child care programs decline by 4% from 2019 to 2021. The loss or unavailability of child care creates a nearly insurmountable barrier for individuals looking for, or trying to keep, employment. If a child care option is found, it must also be affordable and flexible to meet the needs of working parents/guardians with limited influence over their scheduling supervisors. To complicate matters further, COVID-19 precautionary quarantines can take a qualified daycare provider offline, often with little to no warning, for days or weeks at a time. Extended interruptions like this can put an employee's job in danger due to excessive absences.

Lack of sufficient childcare has also been identified by the Kansas Sampler Foundation through the "Power Up and Go" initiative as a critical concern to the sustainability of rural Kansas communities. Goodwill Industries of Kansas regularly witnesses the impact of this difficult reality in both our mission services programs and our retail stores throughout the state of Kansas.

Goodwill's adult education program offers students a chance to earn a high school diploma and in turn a more financially rewarding career. However, it is not uncommon to see a Goodwill adult education student walk considerable distances to attend classes. Students may also ride bicycles from across town, even in the winter, to earn their high school diploma, attend college classes, and find skilled employment. Others take the daily risk of driving on suspended licenses or without any license at all, as it is their only viable option to make it to classes.

One of our Goodwill adult education programs, NexStep Unlocked, offers \$25 gift cards to students when they meet specific milestones/goals. By far the most popular gift card for this group is Autozone. Why? Because students are struggling to keep their vehicles running so they can continue to participate in the program.

Public transportation is time-consuming and does not easily match with parental duties, such as ensuring children make it to school or to a childcare facility (if available). The Wichita Transit bus schedule is limited to daytime hours, making attendance to evening classes or work difficult to arrange.

Goodwill Industries of Kansas sees these issues daily within all aspects of our business, including our own employees, and we are not alone. These are critical barriers that stand between employers who need workers, individuals seeking skilled employment, and a community that needs both.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Laura Ritterbush
President/CEO
Goodwill Industries of Kansas
316-744-9291 or Lritterbush@goodwillks.org



Licensed by the Kansas
Department on Aging
& Disability Services

MISSION: To provide opportunities for people with disabilities and barriers to employment seeking independent and productive lives.



Case Statement: To continue serving Kansas children and families with excellence, Heartspring requests \$7 million in ARPA funding. These funds will address critical workforce and community resource needs for those with intellectual and developmental disability challenges.

Heartspring was founded in 1934 as “The Institute of Logopedics” in partnership with the University of Wichita (WSU). Our early service model prioritized children experiencing speech and hearing challenges. Located on a 35-acre campus in Wichita, Heartspring is now known as one of the most ground-breaking therapeutic schools and outpatient pediatric service centers in the world, serving more than 1000 children, families, and community members annually from 17 Kansas counties. Heartspring offers an array of services that include healthcare, education, and, community resources. We address autism spectrum disorders; speech, language, communication, mobility, and motor function challenges; limitations when regulating stress or distress; and, other developmental healthcare complexities.

Objective: \$7 million in state funding, \$4.4 million from Sedgwick County, \$3.4 million from the City of Wichita to support three primary objectives:

1. Frontline Healthcare Employee Relief – Heartspring employs 500 people in Wichita making us one of the largest nonprofits in the area. Heartspring’s essential frontline healthcare workers were not eligible for the same rescue funding as other healthcare organizations; however, we have a similar staffing crisis. Fatigue, burnout, child care insecurity, and inadequate rates of pay plague our industry and organization. Our staff investment strategy includes:
 - a. Raising the minimum wage to \$15/hr
 - b. Enhancing staff training and development to exceed pre-COVID levels
 - c. Partnering with WSU to provide all Direct Service Personnel access to the Direct Support Professional Badge Program at no cost to the employee
 - d. Building an onsite childcare facility to support shift work
2. Transitional Housing Simulation – Preparing students aging out of the secondary education system for greater independence life long success. Our strategy for increased transition services is:
 - a. Build three transitional home environments on campus allowing twelve students to experience a more independent setting prior to moving into their adult community setting.
3. Workforce Development (WD) – According to the CDC, 17% of children ages 3-17 have a developmental disability, an increasing trend over time. This trend represents the future of our entire workforce. We must prepare our children to be skilled and engaged community members while preparing local businesses to be inclusive and diverse employers. Our strategy for WD is:
 - a. Providing consultation statewide on how to prepare our children for the workforce
 - b. Training community-based professionals on how to work with and employ children with IDD
 - c. Supporting children and families to help them achieve greater independence and autonomy for long-term success.

Heartspring believes the most strategic leverage point for progress is to invest in our citizenry. We want to ensure access to information and opportunities for all. This funding request will provide education, opportunity, good paying jobs, modernization for our infrastructure, preparation for students transitioning to adult community placements, affordable transitional housing, and expanded employment training services to support and train the current and future work force.

10/15/21

SPARK Executive Committee

RE: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Investment

Lt Governor Toland, Speaker Ryckman, President Masterson and Committee,

The American Heart Association views pandemic relief funds as an opportunity to address critical needs areas and strengthen support for vital public health services. We ask that you consider investments in key areas that directly correlate to supporting good health by reducing the prevalence of cardiovascular disease.

- ***Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs***
- ***Hypertension Programs***
- ***Health Equity Programs***
- ***SNAP***

Tobacco Control Programs

Funding and effectively implementing comprehensive tobacco control programs are proven in preventing youth from starting to smoke and helping adult smokers quit. Our work toward the tobacco endgame continues and is more relevant than ever when those who use tobacco products have worse outcomes with illness and chronic disease. We want a strong public health infrastructure to address tobacco education and outreach, robust regulation of tobacco products and stopping the sale of all flavored tobacco products.

Hypertension Programs

While heart disease is still the No. 1 killer in the United States and around the world, death rates have decreased significantly. Earlier and better treatment of high blood pressure has played a key role in that decrease. Supplemental funding to support efforts within county departments of health will help expand access to hypertension programs for diagnosis at the community level.

Managing blood pressure is a lifelong commitment but strong scientific evidence shows that self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) monitoring, also known as home blood pressure monitoring, plus clinical support helps individuals with hypertension lower their blood pressure. Interventions such as this, coupled with lucrative investments in patient and provider education, health IT capacity, and cointerventions can greatly assist with long-term management of cardiovascular health.

Health Equity

The AHA has been a longtime believer that health care should be adequate, accessible, and affordable for everyone in America. Investments to address systemic public health challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic on underserved communities and vulnerable populations are a must. Many public health agency programs targeted at heart disease, stroke and related risk factors and the



disparities that exist in these areas are grossly underfunded and lack the infrastructure needed to address long-term disparity needs in an effective manner.

SNAP

Research shows that to support opportunities to increase the incentive benefit amount to purchase fruits and vegetables, as well as other policies and programs correlates to increased fruit and vegetable consumption. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program has been vital in addressing food insecurity and nutrition in the United States by supporting vulnerable populations and playing an important role in reducing poverty and food insecurity. It is no accident that ARPA supplemental fund guidance specifically calls out investments in this area as vital to ensuring millions of low-income individuals and American families continue to have nutrition assistance.

Thank you again for your ongoing leadership in responding to the needs of communities and citizens, especially those that were hardest hit. If you have questions or would like to discuss further, please contact kari.rinker@heart.org.

Sincerely,

Kari Rinker
Government Relations Director